The Atlanta Journal WEEKEND The Atlanta Constitution

SATURDAY, JULY 25, 1987 \*\*\*

# For fans only

# Walters and Bloom apparently caught in loophole on Carter

#### From Staff and Wire Reports

CATCH-22: Agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom may have done a Catch-22 on themselves in the case of Ohio State wide receiver Cris Carter.

Carter, like so many other athletes involved with the agents, took money and signed a contract with Walters and Blook on May 1, 1986. The contract was postdated to allow Carter to play out the rest of his college eligibility if his signing went undiscovered.

When Carter was declared ineligible by Ohio State last week, Walters and Bloom assumed they would petition the NFL for a supplemental draft. Instead, Carter's petition was filed by his attorney, Robert Berry, who said he will represent the receiver in negotiations.

"That does appear to be a loophole," conceded Gary Walters, an attorney and Walters' son.

A RABBIT BALL?: Much has been said and written about the power surge in major-league baseball this year. And indeed the numbers speak for themselves - home runs are up 20.5 percent over last year in the American League and 26.1 percent in the National League.

But in some minor leagues, the increases are even more dramatic, as research by "Baseball America" reveals.

Home runs are up 49.5 percent in the American Association, 32.6 percent in the Eastern League and 29.4 percent in both the Florida State League and the Texas League.



leagues, home runs are up between five and 20 percent.

So what does all of this mean? If you believe major-league home runs are up because of a more lively ball, then presumably you believe the balls are similarly charged in the minors.

"Baseball America" points out that three models of balls are used in professional baseball: The major leagues use the Rawlings "RO" brand; the Pacific Coast League uses the Rawlings "80CC ball", and all other minor leagues use the MacGregor "97". Home runs are up 22.7 percent with the Rawlings "RO" and 14.4 percent with the MacGregor "97", and

they are down 13.8 percent with the Rawlings "80CC."

If you believe major-league home runs are up because of stronger batters, poorer pitching or smaller strike zones - other popular theories - then presumably you believe the same factors are at work in the minors.

In other words: Take your pick.

A DEVOTION TO RACING: When the Alabama International Motor Speedway held its first Talladega 500 in 1969, Al Spence couldn't make it. But he hasn't missed the race since.

Spence and his wife, Adele, make the 800-mile journey from their home in Mt. Clemens, Mich., every year in time for the July NASCAR race. This year, they will again take their familiar seats in the grandstand to watch the race set for Sunday. The week of the Talladega 500 is va-

cation time for the Spences. "Somebody asked me the other day, 'How does it feel to come back once a year?' " Spence said. "I said it felt like we never left. This is like another home to us."

The couple's devotion to the race has not been without its rewards. They were made honorary citizens of Talladega one year and got a ride in the pace car another time.

But Spence said his greatest thrill was working in a pit crew during qualifying.

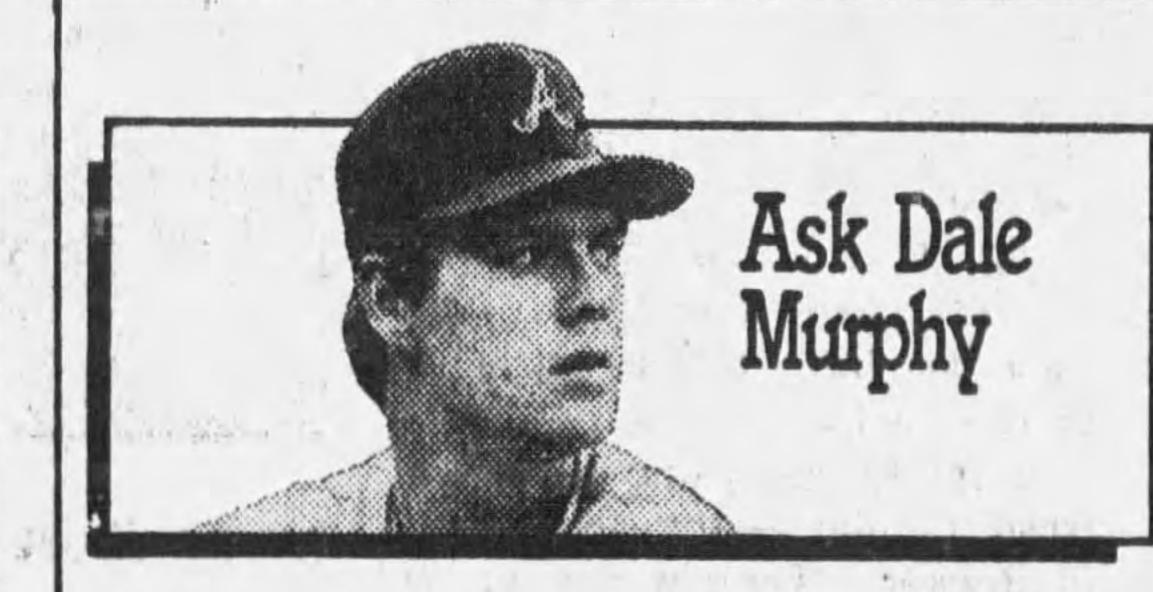
"One year a driver named Earl Canavan pulled into our motel the night before qualifying. I was watching him work on his car and we got to talking. He said he only had two members of his pit crew coming down for qualifying, the others couldn't afford to come until Sunday," he said.

"He said, 'Are you doing anything Thursday? I could use another man in the pit crew. Would you like to work?' I said, 'Does a cat like milk?'"

Carter's postdated contract with Walters and Bloom does not go into effect until Jan. 2, 1988.

Home runs are up 22.9 percent in the International League and 21.2 percent in the Carolina League. In many other minor





## Breaking in new glove is a protracted process

Q. I have a new glove, and it is stiff. How do you break in a new glove properly? - Matthew Rawls, 10, Atlanta.

MATTHEW: One of the best things you can do is play catch with it to make sure you're working the leather and that it forms to your hand the way you like it. But you also need to soften up the leather a little bit.

There are a number of ways to do that. I personally like to rub a little mink oil in the glove. You should be able to get mink oil at a shoe store. Another favorite among players is shaving cream. Some like Intensive Care lotion, a hand lotion. Those are a few of the ways, but don't loosen up the glove to the point it loses its shape.

When you're not playing catch, take your fist and pound it in the pocket to make sure you get a good, deep pocket. It takes a good while, Matthew, to break a glove in until you're satisfied and feel comfortable with it. It's important that you do It yourself so the glove will be the way you like it.

## Fan to Falcons: Pay your bills like the rest of us

Soundoff

An open letter to Tommy Nobis and Rankin Smith Jr.:

It is offensive to me that your "organization" would attempt to control the columns of our city newspapers by withholding advertising dollars.

Most people don't really care about your football team (pity the individual football players who have to put up with such childish management) but we all care about our Freedom of Speech and Freedom of the Press.

Pay your bills like the rest of us - then, why not just move your football "business" to Moscow?

Judith O. Gentry

### Don't whine; just go to Jacksonville

This is the first time in my 40-plus years on this earth that I have been driven to write a letter such as this.

The article on Page 1 of the Atlanta Journal sports section of July 15 is the straw that broke the camel's back. Glenn Sheeley ascribed the following quotes to Rankin Smith Jr.: "The club paid too much money to No. 1 draft choices Bill Fratic and Tony Casillas the past two years and screwed. up by doing so" ... "What they (Tampa Bay Buccaneers) gave (Vinnie) Testaverde was an absolute joke. Let my set the record straight. Or, at a minimum, let me voice my opinions - opinions that, I might add, are shared by more true football fans in Atlanta than there are Falcons ticket holders.

1. An organization that has been characterized by consistent failure for two decades has, in all probability, serious management and leadership problems.

2. For you, Junior, to characterize one of your competition as being "an absolute joke" is, in fact, a joke.

3. Perhaps the signing of Fralic and Casillas was a "screwup." However, if you were to list the total screwups of you and your incompetent father, and Mr. Sheeley were to print them, it would make "War and Peace" look like a short story.

4. Don't hold the city of Atlanta hostage with a new stadium as ransom. Get out! Move to Jacksonville with your daddy and the Falcons. Then, the wonderful city of Atlanta will have a chance of, one day, having a real professional football team.

I hope the Atlanta Journal will print this letter and that you, Junior, will respond.

However, regardless of whether you respond or not, just do us all a favor ... all of us thousands of football fans in Atlanta. Just leave.

Name withheld upon request

### Hawks' ticket package gouging fans

Everyone knows the Atlanta Hawks have great talent and should provide Atlantans with a proven winner for years to come.

However, I have some problems with their recent changes in ticket sales on top of price increases the previous season. Last season I bought two \$12 seats with the 18-game package. It was expensive for me, but I did it and I must say I enjoyed it.

However, this year my two seats went up 25 per cent. The 18-game package is now 22 games and the Hawks' management (I guess needing still more money) is demanding that I watch an exhibition game.

mind doing it again.

able next time, though.

adjusting the sails.

volved as a partner.

athletically."

Yacht Club.

Former Falcons reserve tight end Larry Mialik oversees work in one of his fast food restaurants.

By Hal Hayes

Special to The Journal-Constitution

in "The Heart of America" last year, he wouldn't

Larry Mialik says he had so much fun vacationing

He would like for the results to be more favor-

Do not look for "The Heart of America" on a

map, said Mialik, 36, a reserve tight end for the At-

lanta Falcons from 1972-76. "'The Heart of America'

isn't a place. It's a boat. I spent my 1986 vacation as

a member of the crew, participating in the America's

His main responsibility was hoisting, lowering and

Sailing didn't become a major hobby with the

"I had been nothing more than just a recreational

Mialik, who finished his NFL career in 1977 with

One thing led to another, the Wisconsin graduate

life-long Madison, Wisc., resident until a year ago.

Before then, he had devoted most of his attention to

the eight Burger King restaurants in which he is in-

sallor," he said. "It was just something to do

Houston, became interested in big-time sailing during

a conversation with two members of the Chicago

said, "and the first thing I knew I was on the Chicago

team. I had to try out for the team, of course, and

Cup competition down in Australia. I was a grinder."

MORRY GASH/Special He competed in '86 as a grinder on a yacht in Australia in the America's Cup competition.

## Former Falcons tight end Mialik loved grind of sailing in Australia

## **CLOSEUP: Larry Mialik**

#### Age: 36.

Birthplace: Passaic, N.J.

Residence: Madison, Wis.

Occupation: Partner in eight quick-food restaurants in southern Wisconsin.

Career Highlights: Was a grinder on the crew of "The Heart of America" during the 1986 Americas Cup competition in Freemantle, Australia. His crew was a finalist in the U.S. competition to determine which American entry would challenge the best Australian crew. Was a reserve tight end for the Falcons from 1972-76, coming to Atlanta as its 12th round draft choice in '72. Was waived by the Falcons at the end of the '76 season and signed immediately as a free agent with Houston. He retired from the Oilers at the end of that season.

challengers' competition, then went on to regain the America's Cup with a 4-0 sweep of Kookaburra II, the Australian defender, in the final series. Mialik's boat was fourth.

"We fell just a little bit short," he said. "But at

Q. I'm on a major league (Little League) team. My coach keeps pinch-hitting for me and I don't like it. Is this the right attitude for me? - Stanton Stafford, 10, Atlanta.

STANTON: Well, I think it's always a good attitude to want to stay in and not be taken out for a pinch hitter. I'm sure your coach would want you to have that attitude. That way you will try harder to be successful. It could help you to improve to the point where the coach won't pinch hit for you.

But be careful with your attitude toward your coach. He is the coach and it's his decision, and ultimately it will be the best for you and the coach to show the proper respect for his decision.

Be determined to improve and be a better hitter. Keep on practicing and working at your game, and one day you won't be pinch hit for.

Q. I attend Albany High School and our football teams had losing seasons due to a depleted "feeder system." It's important to Dougherty County football. Our B team and ninth-grade cheerleading squads are just as important to our school. Why is a farm system important to a major league basebali team? - Walter K. Johnson II, 16, Albany, Ga.

WALTER: Minor leagues serve the same purpose you describe — a feeder system to replenish the major leagues' supply of talent. Free agents and trades come along, but there still needs to be talent coming from within to make sure there is continuity.

The main importance of a farm system is that it gives younger players an opportunity to play a lot of baseball. For instance, a minor league team plays 140 games, which is what a young player needs in order to develop as much as possible.

If they were on a major league team, they would - in most cases - play very little. In the minors they get the chance to develop their skills with less pressure and mature both physically and mentally. And then they will be ready when they get the chance.

I don't mind going to the opener, which I would also have to attend, but why can't I choose?

This type of management will keep loyal fans away from The Omni. I think the "Baby Birds" will grow up and give us all a team to be proud of, but I still have to decide whether I can afford to be an active participant at The Omni.

### **Bill Spencer** Decatur

### Falcons should make their own luck

I am no expert on sports, but it doesn't take an expert to recognize the contradiction in the words of Rankin Smith Jr. about the Falcons.

He states that having Bo Jackson, Vinny Testaverde and Brian Bosworth on the team might sell a few more tickets, but the real key to increased attendance is a few more wins.

Whom does he thinks wins games - Lady Luck?

#### **Jane Daniel** Morrow

To voice your opinion on any sports subject, write to SOUNDOFF, Journal-Constitution Sports, P.O. Box 4689, Atlanta, Ga. 30302, or call our Sports Hotline - 526-5050. Include your name and address. We reserve the right to edit all letters and comments.

made it. A short time later, I was on my way to Australia."

Once in Australia, he said, "it was clear that our boat wasn't performing as well as we thought it should. We made some radical changes, though, and made quite an 11th-hour run at Dennis Conner's crew."

least we - America - brought the Cup home, where it belongs. And that's what's important.

"I'm not eager to wish life away," he said, "but I am really looking forward to 1990." That is when America is expected to next defend the Cup.

"I certainly hope I'm asked to be involved again," he said. "I thoroughly enjoyed myself. It was among Conner's boat, the Stars and Stripes, won the the most enjoyable and challenging times of my life."

Atlanta Braves outfielder Dale Murphy answers questions each Saturday. Address your questions to Atlanta Journal-Constitution Sports, P.O. Box 4689, Atlanta, Ga. 30302. Include your name, address, telephone number and age. Due to the volume of mail, only letters selected for publication can be answered.

## **Tickets remaining for only two Georgia home games**

The only tickets remaining for Georgia's 1987 home football season are for the first two games, Sept. 5 against Virginia and Sept. 12 against Oregon State.

Tickets are \$15 each and can be purchased by mail: Georgia Ticket Office, P.O. Box 1475, Athens, Ga., 30613. Include a \$2 mailing fee for certified mail. More information: 542-1231.

**GEORGIA TECH FOOTBALL:** Individual game and season tickets are available for the 1987 football season. The only home game that is sold out is the Georgia game. Tickets are \$18 each and can be purchased by mail: Georgia Tech Ticket Office, Atlanta, Ga., 30332. More information: 894-5447.

AT&T CHALLENGE TENNIS: Tickets for the AT&T Challenge Oct. 6-11 in The Omni are now available at all SEATS locations. Prices range from \$12 to \$25, with a \$35 weekend package available



that includes the semifinals and finals. Tickets for the entire tournament are \$99 (or \$200 for box seats). Both day and evening sessions will be held. The schedule won't be determined until mid-August. Ivan Lendl, Jimmy Connors, Mikael Pernfors, Miloslav Mecir, Andres Gomez and Joakim Nystrom have already committed. For more information: 433-1052.

**ATLANTA BRAVES:** The Braves are on the road until July 28, when they return to Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium for a nine-game homestand.

Single-game tickets are \$8.50 for club level, \$7 for field level and \$5 for upper and lower pavilions. General admission tickets, sold the day of the game,

are \$3 for adults and \$1 for children.

**ATLANTA HAWKS:** The Hawks have started their season ticket sales for the 1987-88 season.

A partial-season ticket plan covers 22 games and costs \$330 for \$15 tickets and \$220 for \$10 tickets. A fan can pick 20 games of his choice, with the other two games being a preseason game against the Houston Rockets and the home opener of the '87-88 season.

Full-season ticket prices are \$756 (\$20 seats), \$567 (\$15 seats), \$378 (\$10 seats) and \$210 (\$5 seats). Season ticket holders have rights to the same tickets for any playoff games and the rights to additional playoff tickets.

Ticket prices have increased to \$5, \$10, \$15 and \$20 for individual games. Courtside seats are sold out.

- Compiled by Piper Jones